

been known to come within nine feet of a stranger (not the park-keeper) who offered them bread, and this with a dozen people standing by, not a single bird, but five of them together. Such tameness is surely extraordinary in the case of a wild bird of this description.

Again, the Whoopers are quite masters of the Mute Swans. They chase the domesticated birds away in their eagerness to secure a tit-bit. Even the Whooper cygnets can do this. Their antipathy to strange dogs is another marked peculiarity, though they are perfectly friendly with the park-keeper's black retriever, because they know it. On one occasion a warning "Honk-Honk" greeted a collie dog that was galloping along the river bank. The dog ventured into the water, and was promptly chased out of it by the Whoopers. And this is not a solitary instance of their objection to strange dogs.

Three of these birds left Carlisle on Sunday, the 26th of March last. They were adults, and the five that remained comprised two adults and three cygnets. This happens to be the last date of which I have any record.

These particulars are extracted from notes sent to me by Mr. T. L. Johnston, of Carlisle; the photograph was taken by Canon Bower of the same place.

XX.—*On the Irish Coal-Titmouse* (*Parus hibernicus*).

By W. R. OGILVIE-GRANT, F.Z.S., M.B.O.U.

(Plate X.)

THE absence of a proper series of skins of Irish birds has frequently been complained of by those who consult the collection in the Natural History Museum, many species, especially among the Passeres, being either very poorly represented or wanting. For years past I had hoped to make a collecting-trip through Ireland in order to rectify this unsatisfactory state of affairs, but the opportunity for carrying

out this scheme never occurred. Recent events, however, in the ornithological world make it imperative that immediate steps should be taken to procure a representative set of our resident Irish species.

It was shewn by Dr. Hartert [Vög. pal. Faun. i. p. 790 (1910)] that the Dipper is represented in Ireland by a perfectly distinct form, for which he proposed the name *Cinclus cinclus hibernicus*. Shortly afterwards I drew attention to the equally interesting fact that the Irish Coal-Titmouse (which I named *Parus hibernicus*) was very different from *P. britannicus*, the representative form of *P. ater* found in Great Britain and also in Co. Down in the north-east of Ireland. More recently, the Irish Jay, also a well-marked insular form, has been described by Mr. Witherby and Dr. Hartert [Witherby's Brit. Birds, iv. p. 234 (1911)] as *Garrulus glandarius hibernicus*. The distinctive characters of the last-named bird had for many years been well known to Mr. R. M. Barrington and other Irish ornithologists, but no one had given it a name.

These interesting discoveries rendered it essential to delay no longer in sending a collector to Ireland to obtain examples of the resident birds from as many different counties as possible.

During short visits paid to Co. Down in the month of January 1904, and again in 1905, I obtained about one hundred and fifty skins, and these represented practically the only series of the resident Irish birds in the National Collection.

Early in January of the present year I sent Mr. A. H. Bishop to Ireland, and, thanks to the kindness of friends, obtained permission for him to visit a number of estates in different parts of the country and to collect without hindrance. He commenced operations in the neighbourhood of Dublin, subsequently moving on to Wicklow, Wexford, Waterford, Kerry, Westmeath, Cavan, and Fermanagh.

During the month he spent on this tour he collected about three hundred skins, mostly of Passerine birds, and among them obtained a fine series of over fifty examples of the

Coal-Titmouse, the bird with which we are at present chiefly concerned. It was important to obtain a representative series of this bird from the various parts of its range, so as to ascertain to what extent, if any, it varied *inter se*, and whether examples of the British Coal-Titmouse occurred in other parts of Ireland besides Co. Down, where I had previously obtained specimens. From Co. Donegal I have recently received several examples of *P. hibernicus*.

On laying out the series of Irish Titmice in geographical order, one is at once struck with their general similarity and distinctive colouring, which enables one, even in their present more or less faded condition, to distinguish them at a glance from an equally large series of Coal-Titmice ranging over Scotland and England, as well as from those mentioned above as having been obtained in Co. Down.

It is unfortunate that in *P. hibernicus* the yellow wash on the sides of the head, nuchal spot, and breast, as well as the cinnamon-colour of the sides and flanks, fades considerably soon after the birds have been skinned, though some specimens retain their colour better than others. No one who has not seen these birds in the flesh can form any idea of how distinct they really are and how bright their coloration is.

The most typical examples of *P. hibernicus* were obtained in Roscommon, Cavan, and Fermanagh.

Among the birds procured by Mr. Bishop there are a few which approach typical examples of *P. britannicus*. One of these was obtained near Dublin, three in Kerry, and Mr. Ussher has recently sent me one from Waterford. It seems probable that the British Coal-Titmouse visits Ireland in winter, and some may possibly remain there to breed, pairing with Irish birds. This would account for the fact that among the large series collected there are some examples which are not quite typical examples of *P. hibernicus*.

The fact that the British Coal-Titmouse also occurs in Ireland and is possibly resident in Co. Down led me at first

to accord full specific rank to *P. hibernicus*, but the examination of the large series before me seems to indicate that the two forms to some extent intergrade, and, for this reason, it may now be best to regard the Irish bird as a subspecies only, but a very distinct one.

It is well known that the young of *Parus britannicus* and its near allies differ from the adult birds in having the sides of the head, as well as the breast and belly, washed with yellow. The persistency of this juvenile character in the adult of *P. hibernicus* seems to indicate that it is of very ancient origin, much more so than its British representative: it seems to represent a pre-Glacial type which has survived in the western and southern parts of Ireland.

Parus ledoucii Malh., a species of Coal-Titmouse peculiar to Algeria, is, in many respects, the form most closely allied to the Irish bird. It has the sides of the head and nuchal spot, as well as the breast and belly, strongly washed with mustard-yellow; but the sides of the body and flanks are greyish instead of cinnamon, as in the young of the British Coal-Titmouse and allied forms in first plumage. The Algerian bird thus seems to represent the most primitive type of plumage still to be found in the younger stages of the allied species, while the Irish bird has gone a step further and has added the cinnamon sides and flanks.

The Lusitanian element which is so strongly represented in the west and south-west of Ireland is less noticeable in the Fauna, but is especially remarkable in the Flora. In the Fauna, an instance of this is to be found in the Kerry Slug (*Geomalacus maculosus*). It was first discovered in Kerry, afterwards met with in Cork, and has since been found in Portugal, where other members of this peculiar genus also occur. It has not been met with in any other part of the British Islands. In the Flora there are many Lusitanian species such as *Erica mediterranea* and *Saxifraga geum*, the distribution of which within the British Isles is confined to the west of Ireland. The most interesting of all, however, as bearing on the question of the Irish and Algerian Titmice, is the so-called "Strawberry-Tree" (*Arbutus*

unedo), which has a wide range in the Mediterranean region and is found in the neighbourhood of Killarney as well as in Algeria.

PARUS HIBERNICUS.

Parus hibernicus Ogilvie-Grant, Bull. B. O. C. xxvii. p. 36 (1910); id. Country Life, xxix. no. 773, p. 99, figs., 21st Jan., 1911; Witherby, in Witherby's Brit. Birds, iv. p. 283 (1911).

The following comparison shews clearly the principal differences in plumage between typical examples of the British and Irish Coal-Titmice:—

Parus britannicus
(Pl. X. fig. 3).

Head and neck glossy blue-black, the light patches of feathers on the sides of the head and neck and the nuchal spot *white*.

Back olive-grey.

Rump and upper tail-coverts washed with brownish fawn-colour, not forming a marked contrast with the back.

Breast and belly dull *whitish* or *greyish-white*.

Sides of the body and flanks *fawn-colour*.

Parus hibernicus
(Pl. X. figs. 1, 2).

Head and neck glossy blue-black, the light patches of feathers on the sides of the head and neck and the nuchal spot *pale mustard-yellow*.

Back olive-grey, washed with yellowish cinnamon-colour.

Rump and upper tail-coverts *cinnamon-colour*, in marked contrast with the back.

Breast and belly whitish, *washed with pale mustard-yellow*.

Sides of the body and flanks *cinnamon-colour*.

The Plate (Pl. X.), which has been drawn by Mr. F. W. Frohawk, shews the differences between freshly killed examples of the British and Irish Coal-Titmice very clearly, but it should be noted that in the most typical Irish birds the flanks are often of a brighter cinnamon in freshly killed examples.



F.W. Frohawk del.

$\frac{4}{5}$

Werner & Winter, Frankfurt 30V

1&2. PARUS HIBERNICUS 3. PARUS BRITANNICUS